DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 675 CS 004 673

AUTHOR Christ, Frank L., Ed.
TITLE Creating Opportunities for Skillful Reading; Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Western College Reading Association (1st, Phoenix, Arizona, April 5-6, 1968). Volume I.
INSTITUTION Western Coll. Reading Association.
PUB DATE Apr 68
NOTE 57p.; For related documents, see CS 004 673-675

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Reading Programs; *Developmental Reading; Higher Education; Junior Colleges; Phonics; Reading Difficulty; Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; *Reading Skills; *Remedial Reading Programs

ABSTRACT

The report drawn from the first annual conference that was designed to provide professional dialogue for those interested in the improvement of college reading programs, this volume contains seven papers that deal with the following topics: the role of literary criticism and rhetoric in developing new models of reading comprehension, a pilot reading center program for the functionally illiterate adult, a self-directed junior college reading program, the problems involved in establishing an effective developmental reading program, an examination of the services offered by the personnel in a junior college reading program, the place of phonics in teaching college students to read, and instructor attitudes toward presenting phonics as a part of reading instruction. (MAI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLFUL READING

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE

WESTERN COLLEGE READING ASSOCIATION

ED166675

APRIL 5-6, 1968

Host Institution: Phoenix College, Phoenix, Arizona
Conference Location: Ramada Inn, Phoenix, Arizona

Frank L. Christ
Editor

WCRA OFFICERS: 1967-1968
President: Robert Griffin
College of the Desert
President-Elect: Frank L. Christ
Loyola University of Los Angeles
Secretary: Loretta Newman
Los Angeles Harbor College
Treasurer: Gil Williams
San Bernardino Valley College

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Western College
Reading Association

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CS004673

VOLUME I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume I: Proceedings of the First Annual Conference

The Practical Critic, the Rhetorician, and a Developing Model of Reading Comprehension
Robert Shafer (Keynote Speaker) 3

Basic Adult Education Courses at U.S.C.
Suzy Gluck 12

College Reading at Diablo Valley College
Elizabeth Shackell Johnson 16

College Reading at Eastern New Mexico University
Jerry Rainwater 23

The All School Reading Program at the Junior College Level
Irwin Joffe 28

Teaching College Phonics at City College of San Francisco
Grace M. Brown 34

Teaching College Phonics at American River College
Barbara Oakman 51

The Practical Critic, the Rhetorician, and a Developing Model of Reading Comprehension

ROBERT SHAFER

Arizona State University

In 1929, I. A. Richards published Practical Criticism which was one of the first major contributions from a literary critic to the study of the reader's comprehension of imaginative literature. Richards gave his students at Cambridge University the opportunity to write comments or "protocols" with the general view of interpreting the meaning of particular poems, "ranging in character from a poem by Shakespeare to a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox." Richards (7, p.11) analyzed the "protocols" finding "an astonishing variety of human responses" from which he drew a "list of principal difficulties in reading poetry which appeared in Practical Criticism was intended in part by Richards (7, p.3) to "prepare the way for educational methods more efficient than those we use now in developing discrimination and the power to understand what we hear and read." (2)

Few "educational methods" which have had as their central purpose the development of efficiency in reading for meaning have appeared since 1929. Few comprehensive models of the total reading process have appeared and those which we have had are under reconsideration and although most teachers will admit that there are intimate connections between the process of writing and that of reading, there is ample evidence that these connections are not usually exploited pedagogically.

Richards' findings still have many implications for us. What essentially did Richards find? He found that readers have certain difficulties in understanding and comprehending. Although his study was of the reading of poetry, it seems that many of the difficulties in reading apply to forms other than poetry. What are these difficulties? Richards called one of the major difficulties "making out the plain sense of poetry." He stated further:

> They fail to make out its prose sense, its plain overt meaning, as a set of ordinary, intelligible English sentences, taken quite apart from any further poetic significance. And equally they misapprehend its feeling, its tone, and its intention...They would travesty it in a paraphrase. (7, p.12)

A second difficulty readers had was labeled by Richards as "sensuous apprehension." As Richards put it:

> Words in sequence have a form to the mind's ear and the mind's tongue and larynx, even when silently read. They have a movement and may have a rhythm. The gulf is wide between a reader who naturally and immediately perceives this form and movement (by a conjunction of sensory, intellectual, and emotional sagacity) and another reader who either ignores it or has to build it up with finger-counting, table-tapping and the rest; and this difference has the most far reaching affects. (7, p.13)

How many of us have had students who balk at tackling the poetic form or even the short story or essay form? As Richards noted, many of his students were troubled by "irregular" metric and rhythmic patterns probably where their expectations were conditioned in part by their classical training (involved in the reading of Latin verse). They were apparently expecting regularity. Expecting regularity they were confused by what seemed "irregularity." But as Richards points out:

> The potent fact is that the best verses are frequently irregular, that almost as often as not they fail to conform....instead of strict conformity with a pattern, an arrangement of departures from and returns to the pattern has come to be regarded as the secret of poetic rhythm. The ear, it has been thought, grows tired of strict regularity but delights in recognising, behind the variations, the standard that still governs them. (7, p.216)

A third reading difficulty noted by Richards was that occurring when "visual imagery" played a part in reading: The difficulties in part, Richards felt, stem from the incurable fact that we differ immensely in our capacity to visualize and to produce imagery. He noted:

> Some readers are constitutionally prone to stress the place of imagery in reading, to pay great attention to it, and even to judge the value of poetry by the images it excites in them. But images are erratic things; lively images which abound in one mind need have no similarity to the equally lively images stirred by the same line of poetry in another, and neither set need have anything to do with any images which may have existed in the poet's mind. (7, p.13)

Richards found that his students had great difficulty accepting, understanding, and interpreting all figurative language in reading. The trouble with the reader who looks only for literalism, he noted:

> is that the reader forgets that the aim of the poem comes first and is the sole justification of its means. We may quarrel, frequently we must, with the aim of the poem, but we have first to ascertain what it is. We cannot legitimately judge its means by external standards (such as accuracy or fact or logical coherence) which may have no relevance to its success in doing what it set out to do or if we like, in becoming what in the end it has become. (7, p.195)

Another series of pitfalls for Richards' students were "mnemonic irrelevancies." These are misleading effects of the readers being reminded of "some personal scene or adventure, erotic association, or the interference of emotional reverberations from a past which may have nothing to do with the poem. (7, p.13) Richards' readers threw whole trains of irrelevant associations having to do with homesickness, their opinions on the musical qualities of hymns, and politics squarely into the midst of whole poems which had nothing to do with these subjects.

A fifth reading problem isolated by Richards was labeled "stock responses." These occur:

> Whenever a poem seems to or does, involve views and emotions already fully prepared in the readers mind, so what happens appears to be more the readers doing than the poets. (7, p.14)

Richards devoted an extensive part of Practical Criticism to the analysis of the workings of stock responses claiming that:

> their intervention, moreover, in all forms of

> human activity in business, in personal relationships, and in courts of justice--will be recognized and any light which the study of poetry may throw upon their causes, their services, and their disadvantages and on the ways in which they may be overcome should be generally welcome. (7, p.228)

The sixth pitfall for readers which Richards noted is "sentimentality." He called it "a peril which is due to overfacility in certain emotional directions" and noted that it was related to his seventh difficulty, "inhibition." Of sentimentality he said:

> a person may be said to be sentimental when his emotions are too easily stirred or too late on the trigger. . . . Certain rhythms and sounds. . . . and sounds of certain quality, perhaps through their associations a trumpet and the nightingale, for example, all of these readily facilitate emotional orgies. (7, p.252)

Richards concludes his discussion of sentimentality with the notion that the poet should not shy away from arousing the evoking emotions but should attempt to give "enough nearness, concreteness, and coherence to the situation to support and control the response that it ensues." (7, p.252) With inhibition he points out that "all order and proportion is the result of inhibition; we cannot indulge one mental activity without inhibiting others." (7, p.253) Yet he linked inhibition and sentimentality by proposing that:

> The man who in reaction to the commoner naive forms of sentimentality, prides himself on his hard-headedness and hard-heartedness, his hard boiledness generally and seeks out or invents aspects with a bitter or squalid character, for no better reason than this is only displaying a more sophisticated form of sentimentality. (7, p.253)

That such forms of sentimentality constituted barriers for many of his readers was amply demonstrated by Richards in Practical Criticism, and many teachers will undoubtedly recognize examples of its operations in their own students.

Perhaps the most well known reading pitfall into which Richards' readers fell was the one he called "doctrinal adhesions." He presented them as problems which occur when the reader confronts something in what he is reading which seems to imply a "view or belief, true or false, about the

world." He noted that many readers were stopped short by an expression of such a belief whether or not it had any relationship to the worth of the poetry or the piece of writing or not. Richards further observed "if the beliefs are not really contained or implied but only seem so to a non-poetical reading, what should be the bearing of the reader's conviction, if any, upon his estimate of the poetry?" (7, p.14)

Richards labeled "technical presuppositions" as those expectations which the reader has in confronting certain literary forms where:

> There is an expectation that the reader expects similar things to be done in the future in the same fashion that they were done in the past and are disappointed or do not recognize them if they are done differently. As he noted, a technique which has shown its ineptitude for one purpose tends to become accredited for all. (7, p.16)

He compared this to putting means before ends and likened it to attempting to "judge a pianist by his hair." Many teachers of modern poetry, for example, may find this problem to be a continuing one for readers. The writer recalls vividly an attempt to teach a group of high school seniors the poetry of e. e. cummings. They were aghast at what they considered to be his obvious flouting of the conventions of writing, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation that many failed even to make out "the plain sense" of his poetry.

Richards last readers' pitfall he called "general critical preconceptions" which he labeled "prior demands made upon poetry as the result of theories--conscious or unconscious--about its nature and value" which intervene endlessly as the history of criticism well shows between the reader and the poem. His discussion of this particular pitfall develops the concept of a critical point-of-view operating as reader interference.

> Most critical dogmas, preconceptions of the kind that can be and are applied to poetry, have almost exactly the intellectual standing and the serviceableness of primitive 'superstitions.' They rest upon our desire for explanation, our other desires, our respect for tradition, and to a slight degree upon faulty induction. Sometimes, by good fortune, they are useful; on the whole they make us much more stupid than we would be without them. Only such an experiment as that which produced the protocol (a small selection only of the harvest and not, in this respect of the selection of extreme examples) can convince anyone of the extent

> of their interference. . . . They interfere in two different ways by blinding the reader to whatever else is in the poem so that he forces his predilection, if he can upon the poem--rejecting comparatively unread, poems that will not allow it; secondly, by blurring and disabling his judgement. Any general theory that we may be tempted to apply to poetry and continue to apply must, unless we are very Napoleonic readers, be of the kind which disguises great vagueness and ambiguity behind an appearance of simplicity and precision. (7, p.282)

Richards objected to the use of words like "sincerity," "truth," "sentimentality," "expression," "belief," "form," "significance," and "meaning" as being at such a high level of abstraction that he felt they did not allow the reader to express any choice about the poem. He further noted that all critical doctrines are attempts to convert choice into what may seem the safer activity--the reading of evidence and the applications of rules and principles. They are, he noted, an invasion into the inappropriate sphere of that modern transformation, "the displacement of the will by observation and judgement." (7, p.283)

Instead of deciding for ourselves whether we are too cold or too warm, "we hang up a thermometer." But feelings are, in the end, all that matter for the reader of poetry, and "we cannot substitute any doctrine whatsoever without being betrayed." (7, p.283-84)

In looking at this early comprehensive study of reading comprehension, one is struck by the implications not only of the variety of pitfalls to reading which encumbered Richards' students, but the simple fact must also be noted that so many able and well-prepared (for the time) products of what was then and still is one of the most exclusive systems of education in the modern world had such difficulty in making a natural response to what they were reading. That this remains a central problem in reading has been verified by the studies of Squire (10) and others. Richards went on to develop a model of reading comprehension which he felt would, if applied by readers who had been properly trained in his methods, overcome many of the problems of mis-reading he had noted in Practical Criticism.

Although Richards' work is well known to linguists, semanticists, and to rhetoricians--indeed some see it as a cornerstone in the development of a new rhetoric--it has not attracted the attention among reading specialists that it might considering the problems that students continue to face in comprehending. (4) As is well known, few models of the reading process have appeared. By far the most detailed model

was presented by William S. Grey in 1960 and has been recently revised by his long-time colleague at the University of Chicago, Helen M. Robinson. In her 1966 statement, Robinson (8) points out the difficulty created by the models and partial models now available in reading. She noted that this difficulty has its origins in the failure to differentiate clearly among (a) the process required to read, (b) the skills and abilities used in reading, and (c) the procedures used to teach reading. The Grey-Robinson model is essentially a model of the skills and abilities used in reading although there is some overlap into the tasks and behaviors involved in the reading process as well as some suggested implications for teaching reading. Clymer (3), in a thoughtful review of several models of reading including the Grey-Robinson model, notes that:

> Robinson has properly centered her attentions on the skills as the area most likely at present to produce fruitful results. . . . and Robinson's refinement of the model has clarified word perception and comprehension; but, to this writes further delineation and description of the skills in assimilation and reaction are important future developments which probably must await additional evidence from basic and applied research.

Clymer, after reviewing other recent work in reading comprehension introduces a newly developed "Taxonomy of the Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Reading Comprehension," by Barrett. (1)

Barrett's taxonomy draws on the work of Bloom (2), Sanders (9), Letton (6), and Guszak (5) and divides reading comprehension into five major categories which are descriptive of the various behavioral tasks that a reader must perform in order to comprehend according to his purposes. The categories are 1) literal comprehension, 2) reorganization, 3) inferential comprehension, 4) evaluation, and 5) appreciation. Although Clymer discusses the taxonomy in some detail nothing that "as is true with all taxonomies, the orderly presentation of categories may suggest a greater precision than the classification system really posesses," and he notes the value of taxonomy in "developing purposes and questions for guiding children's reading" so that "teachers may apply taxonomy to questions presented in basal manuals to determine what types of comprehension are emphasized in the selections." Notwithstanding these valuable applications, Barrett's taxonomy may be of more value in use for research purposes in understanding the various components of the reading process at all of the various levels of reading comprehension—a task to which Richards also con-

tributed. His early studies of the problems of readers in Practical Criticism (1929) as well as The Meaning of Meaning (1923), Principles of Literary Criticism (1924), and Science and Poetry (1925) all led toward a theory of interpretations (or comprehension in reading) which he formulated for classroom teaching in Interpretation in Teaching in 1938. How to Read a Page (1942) and Speculative Instruments (1955) continue his explorations of the process of interpretation (comprehending).

Time is not available in this paper to attempt an analysis of the implications of Richards' work or for that matter the work of other literary critics and rhetoricians for the new models of reading comprehension which are being presented to us. The burden of this paper is that both literary criticism and rhetoric have much to contribute to the development of new models of comprehending.

What is to be hoped is that reading specialists and researchers in the teaching of reading will widen their scope to encompass these contributing disciplines as the search continues for more adaquate models of the process of comprehension.

REFERENCES

1. Barrett, Thomas C., "Taxonomy of Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Reading Comprehension," unpublished paper quoted in Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction, Sixty-Seventh Yearbook for the National Society for the Study of Education, Robinson, Helen M., editor, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, pp. 2-23.

2. Bloom, Benjamin S., and others, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I, Cognitive Domain, New York: Longmans, Green & Company, 1956.

3. Clymer, Theodore, "What is Reading?" Some Current Concepts," Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction, Sixty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Robinson, Helen M., editor, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, pp. 20-23.

4. Fogarty, Daniel S. J., Roots for a New Rhetoric, Teachers College Press, New York, 1959, pp. 28-47.

5. Guszak, James, "Reading Comprehension Solicitation Response Inventory," unpublished paper, University of Wisconsin, 1965.

6. Letton, Mildred C., "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Teaching Reading," in Evaluation of Reading, Robinson, Helen M., editor, "Supplementary Educational Monographs," No. 88, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp. 76-82.

7. Richards, I. A., Practical Criticism, Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc. New York, 1929.

8. Robinson, Helen M., "The Major Aspects of Reading," Chapter III in Reading: Seventy-Five Years of Progress, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 96, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp. 22-23.

9. Sanders, Norris M., Classroom Questions, New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

10. Squire, James R., The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, 1964, passim.

Basic Adult Education Courses at U.S.C.

SUZY GLUCK

University of Southern California

Of special interest to the members of The Western College Reading Association might be the pilot program at The University of Southern California Reading Center for the "functionally illiterate" adult.

In February of this year I started two small (maximum, 12 per class) classes to run for fifteen weeks, meeting twice weekly for one and one-half hours a session or for a total of three hours of instruction weekly. Total: 45 hours in all. What I am trying to do is crowd into 45 hours what they should have learned in twelve years of schooling!

The students range from 18 to 48 years in age and have a variety of occupations: truck driver, dairy worker, box-boy, mechanic, salesman, optometrist's aide (this is a recent promotion from a job of dishwasher). There is only one girl—an Oriental 18 year old student, bi-lingual, in whose home no English is spoken by her parents and who did not speak English until she entered school. Her main problem is spelling and pronunciation. Other students exhibit a wide range of difficulties from inability to write what they are able to say, to not being familiar with commonly used English words, to gross errors in simple sentence construction, to inaccurate sound discrimination.

I began by testing individually in a counselling session on the Jastak WRAT inventory and the Gilmore Oral Paragraphs. During the first class meeting I administered the California Achievement for Adults, using the Intermediate Level test: the E(easy) form was too insulting and the D(difficult) far too taxing. An overall sampling revealed that the students were reading at levels 4th to 9th, that frustration tolerance was low (one student refused to continue past the second comprehension paragraph saying, "Heck, if I could read this, I wouldn't need no reading class"). He is a metal plater, a

former burglar, who was in six different schools before he dropped out at 16 years. I might also add, he is a diligent student who always arrives early for class and really works hard.

The description of the plater is not unusual; most students had dropped out of school some years back and thus were not test-wise and had great trouble following the test directions. I now use the test as a teaching tool. We reviewed the confusing items and I gained valuable insights about what they thought was expected of them from the test.

As the main teaching tool (track) I use the Allied Education Council Mott Basic Language Skills materials which present the phonic and linguistic approach in a most palatable way for adults. These workbooks are consumable and have specific skills presented and practice materials to reinforce each newly introduced skill. A paperback dictionary is indispensable once students realize the valuable and dependable information it gives. Interspersed with this structured presentation of the Mott skills, and this is the ONLY structured item on each lesson's agenda, are discussions about news events, politics, and living in the ghetto (although only 4 out of 24 students are black, 2 are Mexican-American, 1 is Oriental, and the rest Caucasian and native-born). We read menus, news releases sent from local television and radio stations, government publications. We read anything and everything. We use 'News for You', a simplified newspaper published weekly by the Lauback Literacy Council, but we also read The New York Times! We read and dissected a sports article a few weeks ago about Buster Mathis' losing the heavyweight match. Publications that are found in secondary schools e.g. Scope, Read, News Digest, are read. In plentiful supply are sport magazines: Hot Rod, Skin Diving, Guns and Ammunition, sent free each month from Peterson Publication. We read Science and Readers Digest as well as Look, Life and now the students are reading Time magazine weekly for the first time...a tremendous accomplishment, I feel. As many different newspapers as it is possible to get are read: The Wall Street Journal, local papers, and even Free Press and Mohammed-Muslim papers are reviewed. The students are quite able to make valid criticisms of what they read. I encourage discussion, but they must write down their thoughts. This is often a hang-up for them. Getting their vast verbal vocabulary into print is a chore for them. The class curriculum is geared to the students' likes and needs. We spent time completing a sample income tax form, a health form, and an insurance form. We spent 30 minutes following the lyrics of rock songs. Students now know how to spell the words to "Cherish," "I Believe," and "I Think I'm Goin Out of my Head."

Our half-way mark finds us reading and enjoying Catcher In the Rye; this is the first introduction for them to Sal-

inger. I am constantly amazed at the insight of these students who six weeks ago said, "I'm stupid; I can't read." Now they are conditioned to say, "I can't read WELL ENOUGH TO SUIT MY NEEDS."

What are their needs? Many mention a better job which requires their passing some kind of qualification exam. Some have young school-age children who say "Why should I learn to read? Daddy doesn't!" (That hurts). Some hope to get into a junior college and must improve their writing, spelling, and reading and overall education. The gaps which exist in their formal learning are enormous. They are stamped "educated" (some do have a high school diploma) but are, in fact, reading and writing at levels five and below.

In California it is estimated that there are over 2 million functionally illiterate adults reading at level five and below. In an area adjacent to the university, the Watts area, a recent newscast showed idle Negroes, ten to twenty THOUSAND of them who, it is estimated, have a reading level of grade five. My students are NOT from Watts. They are working, functioning, out-of-trouble adults who have a tremendous motivation to rectify what happened to them in their early school years. They speak of being dumped into 'special' reading classes, of being told they were stupid, of feigning very sophisticated behaviors to avoid reading. They now want to learn and they are.

Unfortunately we have no funding for this program to continue at USC. The Reading Center's activities must be self-supporting. The tuition fee for this 45 hour course is $150.00. I strongly feel, and know from tabulated calls received, that many more would take advantage of this small, dynamic, need-oriented class if the cost were not so prohibitive. This makes me sad, but not discouraged; some way we shall continue.

Each week requires reassessment regarding the needs and growth of the students, the frustrations they encounter, the interaction of their personalities, and the urgent passing of time. Anecdotes are frequent regarding their frustrations, but they are also becoming more frequent about their successes. Their self-evaluation forms reveal that they are no longer afraid to try to read, that they will try new materials from which they have always shied away.

For many such adults this class is a "last try opportunity." They had evidently just about reached bottom, were convinced they were failures, ignorant, unworthy and all the other subjective feelings the 'non-reader' harbors, when the USC News Bureau ran a brief announcement for us in the local papers telling of this course for adult non-readers geared specifically to the levels and interests of the mature adult.

I can only say that for me the hours spent in these classes are the most rewarding I have. Attendance is nearly perfect; attention almost intense, and progress obvious. Many express

that learning to read has united the family; some of the children delight in giving Dad his spelling words! The families now read together. They say they eagerly anticipate the non-threatening environment of the class with other adults and with an instructor who also is eager to learn. The writings of the students reflect their feelings. In a collection of originally written stories I hope to publish entitled An Adult Statement there are stories like "Tolerance," "Getting a Better Job," "My Choice For President," "I am the People," "The Hopeful Millions," and there are poems, one of which I include here written by a truck driver who is also a prize winning photographer. It is entitled "To Live in Fear":

To be in the dark
So dark, so dreary.
To reach for the light
you see not so clearly.
To reach for the words
you need so dearly.
So clearly, you see the dark.
So dearly, you need a spark.
To light the way, the way to learning.

What is my goal? I would like to be able to offer this opportunity to hundreds a year, to invite them onto the USC campus where they ordinarily would never venture, to prove to them that they can learn, that the doors are opening again for them. Not only will they be better citizens, think of themselves in higher esteem, but they will light the way to learning for their children.

College Reading at Diablo Valley College

ELIZABETH SHACKELL JOHNSON

Diablo Valley College

In a paper "A Plan for Self-directed Change in an Educational System" by Carl R. Rogers of the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute (4), Dr. Rogers states "In the world which is already on us, the goal of education must be to develop individuals who are open to change, who are flexible and adaptive, who have learned how to learn, and are thus able to learn continuously."

He goes on, a few paragraphs later to say, "a way must be found to develop, within the educational system, a climate conducive to personal growth, a climate in which innovation is not frightening, in which the creative capacities of administrators, teachers, and students are nourished and expressed, rather than stifled...one in which the focus is not on teaching, but on self-directed learning." These concepts are most appropriate for anyone creating a reading program.

As we look back on the years since 1950 when the reading program at Diablo Valley College really started, it is apparent that my colleagues were imbued with the spirit of Rogers' statement. The answer to the 'why' is often expressed by our instructors when they mention having to change a text "because the student cannot read it," or "I don't assume that because they're college students, they know how to read. I give detailed study questions on every chapter," or as one put it, he gives ample explanations in class so they can get something out of the course. A sad commentary on education, society, and an even sadder outlook for the future in an age of multi-mass communications.

The performance of junior college students seems to confirm an editorial conclusion by Donovan Bess (1) that "Force and learning are contradictory--their main product is temporary conformity at examination time."

It is imperative that we develop the ability for initiative

for independent study, for exercise of the student's intellectual curiosity, so that he may cope with his world.

Our president, Dr. William Niland, states that if a college freshman reads at 7 or 8th grade level, or even 9 or 10th, some "remedy" must be applied. He favors greater emphasis on channeling students into reading classes. At this point this writer's belief in free choice which tends to remove the stigma of "required," takes over. The classes at DVC have free enrollment. True, counselors aid students in their own recognition of need (a euphemism for arm-twisting, I presume), but only in an extreme case has it been suggested that to take Communication 116 would be very wise for someone on Probation. From five World War II veterans who came to my office for 6 weeks, one hour a day, to 22 sections of a 3 unit transfer course, is the story of our progress from 1950 to 1968 in reading instruction.

Whether we call the courses "remedial" or "developmental" becomes academic jousting in most instances. A student who cannot read efficiently enough to carry a regular load, 12-15 units, needs to have what skills he does posess developed, or one may say a "remedy" must be applied to correct the difficulty no matter what caused him to lack skill. The important factor seems to hinge upon the psychological not the semantic difference in terms. Students are quick to demean themselves if placed in "bone-head" sections (synonymous with remedial in some areas) and will so consider themselves when they have had less than pleasant educational experiences up to this point. Here in California the "open door" of the junior college is often the first time someone in education has said, "Come in, we believe you have skills and talents and are here to help you as an adult."

Other questions harass the builders of reading programs. What are some of them?

There is a body of subject matter in reading. It is more than performance. Individual vs. group work is a constant source of discussion when reading teachers assemble. When a student states that he has never read a book through, is it enough to assign twelve books for an "A" or do we have the responsibility to go behind that statement to assess the values, if any, of such an assignment? This leads to the topics of levels of difficulty and choices of reading material. The vocabulary depth and resourcefulness of the student in unlocking the meaning and pronunciation of a never before encountered word implies more reading, phonics, spelling, the coordination of the four areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. "Why didn't the author say that, if that is what he meant?" is also the repeated complaint of struggling students in critical reading. All these and more must be included. Where do we begin?

It is wise to start, as Mager (3) states in Preparing

Instructional Objectives, with three questions: 1) What is it we must teach? 2) How will we know when we have taught it? 3) What materials and procedures will work best to teach what we want to teach? His theory is that an objective is an intent to teach and observe measurable changes in behavior.

The brief objectives in the developmental course are:

A. To improve comprehension and speed of reading

B. To give experience and method of reading various types of college subject matter (develop flexibility)

C. To develop special skills which aid reading: to increase eye-span, decrease sub-vocalization, etc.

D. To develop vocabulary resources

E. To develop skills of critical reading

F. To assist the student to analyze his problems and to undertake a sound program of self-improvement

These were decided upon in general with the understanding that all instructors would emphasize those most needed by the individual or class. Up to the present, with four full-time instructors, these precepts seem to be adequate. However, the content for a course in reading can be adapted for the traditional remedial course or expanded in any area as the needs arise. The philosophy of one's college, whether it be the firm adherence to a tracking system, or the more humane and equally effective non-tracking, the number of students needing help, the available staff and the facilities all determine course content. One does not enroll in this as in some speed reading course, pay one's fee and hope that something will happen. The community college does not operate in this crass manner. There is more to a college course than that one-way street.

What can be included in a college course to improve reading depends somewhat upon diagnosed needs. Many colleges use high school grades, college aptitude tests or various diagnostic tests to assess achievement at entrance. Providing that there is a wide range battery of results from which to determine competence, this system is sound. Another important factor is that the so-called competence or lack of it be based upon reasonable hope of actually helping the student to succeed. Often this is explored in counseling interviews. It appears at times as if the purpose of cut-off scores in tests is to thin the ranks, much as one hears teachers gleefully proclaim that "this assignment will get rid of the loafers,

then we can get on with something worthwhile." If this seems cynical and bitter, it is meant to be. Why teach at all if we cannot at least attempt to help those who need it most? The apt student will learn in spite of us. Either before, or early in the course, we should further test to diagnose additional strengths and weaknesses. Note that the writer does not call them disabilities. Problems they are, but disability and deficiency have a devastating negative connotation. These students have been negatively dealt with almost ever since they started their formal education. At this time we shall not attempt to mention specific diagnostic tests. There are many. The more varied the skills tested the better profile one can assemble. In our classes we use four or five and are eager to learn of different ones. All available testing scores from personnel should also be available to the reading teacher. There is a strange dichotomy when a student is required to take hours of tests and then a great mystery shrouds their results. He is the one most concerned. He has to live with his capabilities and he has to develop them or not. He probably knows nearly as much as tests tell anyway. This is the way he is, now let us plan to help him strengthen and develop himself. Following this, the use of tests at the conclusion of a course serves the learning function well. This is an application of the theory of observing measurable behavior. We and he can assess our progress also. Students are realistic; let us be the same.

Colleges which place students in various levels of remedial work may find it helpful to avoid the camouflage of calling the course Psychology, Study Skills, or whatever. All of our courses are Communication through reading. The students who lack word attack skills can concentrate on developing their knowledge of phonics, knowledge in applying phonemic theory, but hopefully through reading, not in isolation. The real carry over of isolated phonics or vocabulary rarely goes beyond the stage of "it seems we did have that word but what does it mean?" Let them read—not watered down pap, but current vital ideas. Maybe we prefer MacLuhan or Churchill or E.E. Cummings, but do they? Are they ready for the struggle or are they weary from lack of success with our choices in previous school years?

It would be presumptuous to outline courses of study here, but there are some areas of assistance that are valuable whatever system one uses for grouping. One of these is "hardware."

To dispose of the place of machines and speed in reading, it is only necessary to say that they can help some people. Just as rigidity of any method can defeat its purpose—so with machines. In some eighteen or twenty years of this work the writer has discovered no appreciable difference in results when machines were used than when not available.

Careful research by others seems to bear this out. True, most feel that they help by motivating or by controlling speed. Our tendency when timing speed is to err in the student's favor. Greater spread of levels of difficulty and really "gutty" readings need to be prepared for use in this way. Additional types of materials need to be developed for use with the various machines. With due respect to films, we can dispose of them by realizing that Elbert Hubbard does not "turn on" this generation. The use of other controlled pacers and phrase reading devices, however, is stimulating to most students.

Lighter, easily comprehended articles are useful in this manner, but most readings should and can be "good literature." There is much in the past which has appeal today. There is much written today on what students think are new problems, and these writings are well-written even if evaluated by our stringent standards of excellence. Let us not spoil an artistic writing by using it for a laboratory dissection of sentence structure, paragraph organization or logic, at least until it has been enjoyed in its entirety as intended. Use something which even more sharply and negatively emphasizes our principles through being poorly written. Actually the negative is easier to recognize. Students are alert to confused presentation, to wordiness, to false conclusions when they try to read them and cannot understand. Compared later with a logical, well-written selection, they rather quickly recognize the differences.

The matter of developing the ability to form an opinion of the author's point of view or purpose when we develop critical reading criteria takes longer. All their lives they have been told to read every word, read carefully, remember WHAT you read. No matter how hard the junior high or secondary teachers try to overcome this, they have difficulty. Part of this stems from immaturity of the reader. The secondary teachers also deal with a "captive audience." Essentially we can not expect to develop maturity in the students when, having decided to come to college, they discover some schools continue to brand them with sections X, Y, Z. This system is easier for the teacher, but this writer has no evidence that the students profit more from the above system. Somewhere some one must respect them and recognize their ability to think, or at least help them to do it. Perhaps the students are not schooled in this technique,but that does not mean we cannot help them to do this essential reading task of evaluating what they read. They need every chance to become more independent persons. We reading teachers can help them clarify their values and their aims by assisting them in reading critically. After all, they will vote too, and there will be more votes in our community from them and their fellows than from us. Let us help them to enjoy the

work of thinking.

And who are "We?" Earlier we mentioned the reading teacher. What kind of person is he? Our own personalities, our patience, our respect for what we are doing or the lack of it are part of the picture. No one, to repeat and emphasize, no one should be teaching anything, especially reading, unless he genuinely likes young people of all levels of ability. To hear a reading teacher exclaim about the administration "having it in for me" and assigning me to teach those "lazy, stupid kids who never will learn anyway" makes the writer curdle within and become belligerent. These "kids" are PEOPLE. The fact that many were not given the opportunity, for whatever the reason, to develop what abilities they posess may not be their fault. On the other hand, maybe you and others like you tried to teach them. It was there; they were exposed; but it didn't take. Reading is not the measles, although it may seem that some have built strong immunity to its attack. The two-year college is the last possible chance for some to ever have anyone show interest in their academic stature. If you are not a happy, enthusiastic, energetic, and at times discouraged human when you try to teach reading improvement, get out of that classroom as soon as you and the administration can arrange it. You do everyone an injustice.

There are many occasions when it appears that teachers resist the interests of their students. Some even bemoan that opportunity to "communicate" when a student asks a question related to the subject but involving some time-consuming explanation. "I couldn't give the quiz I planned and now we won't finish the text, we'll be 20 pages from the end," one science lecturer told me with despair. What a wonderful opportunity to capture that student's curiosity!

In our courses we allow time for browsing in our reading studio section adjoining the classroom. We try to have each one chronicle his week's reading with a brief summary (one sentence) of content followed by one or two comments of his opinion of the manner in which the author handled his material. This system provides freedom to read in one's interest area, helps practice in "faster-than-comfortable" reading and builds critical analysis techniques.

Most instructors use a text with theory and exercises plus a laboratory text of readings for comprehension and vocabulary with opportunities for timed reading.

We believe the psychology of learning is basic to reading improvement. Delayed recall demands different techniques from those for reading science and mathematics. In reading in other school subjects we frequently use students' own text-books with questions which would be used in their classes. We also confer with instructors in other departments to gain hints for efficient reading in other subjects.

Our Reading Center enables students to come for practice or reading without disturbing classes in session. Often every extra machine is in use and the lounge chairs in the studio are occupied. Our paper-backs number over 150 in each room (2 classrooms) while our magazine racks are well-stocked with periodicals subscribed for Reading Center. The instructors need to supplement the copies from their own supply in order to have enough multiple copies for student interest.

There is a general sense of pleasantness and enthusiasm for the courses among our students. They like the course, recommend it to their friends but with the warning "You 'earn' those three units, do not take it if you do not want to work."

Part of this geniality stems, we believe, from the belief that reading must be part of the life of every adult, that it affects his work, his personal life in many aspects. A recent monograph from Teachers College's The Record (2) entitled "Taking Advantage of the Disadvantaged" points out that "service oriented economy demands workers more flexible and with greater verbal communication skills than those of a production worker." The authors go on to encourage teachers to plan courses that furnish "orientation to four major careers: work, parent, citizen, and person." The authors also support the need to recognize "the effective elements in learning--the emotions and personal concerns of the students."

The student-teacher relationships which we hold in esteem at Diablo Valley College stem from our endeavor to meet our students as people. We definitely do not engage in therapy, but success in a key area such as reading, we believe, relieves many tensions, unlocks many hidden capabilities.

We do not have the perfect system, not does anyone. We believe in change for improvement, but we believe we have exhibited better than average success in helping someone to enjoy his college studies.

REFERENCES

1. Bess, Donovan, "Putting the Student Into Education," San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 11, 1967, pp. 20-21.

2. Fantini, Mario and Weinstein, Gerald, Taking Advantage of the Disadvantaged, Ford Foundation Report in The Record, Nov. 1967, V. 69, No. 2, Teachers College, Columbia University.

3. Mager, Robert F., Preparing Instructional Objectives, Palo Alto, California: Fearon Publishers, 1962.

4. Rogers, Carl R., A Plan for Self-directed Change in an Educational System, Western Behavioral Science Institute, La Jolla, California.

College Reading
at
Eastern New Mexico University

JERRY RAINWATER

Eastern New Nexico University

General Education 111, Developmental Reading, is a recent innovation in the Eastern New Mexico University curriculum. This program was first introduced in the fall of 1964 and was designed to meet the needs of marginal students. The specific objective of the course is to reduce the failure rate within this particular group. It was felt that the holding power of the university could be strengthened within the ranks of these potential dropouts whose failure was partly attributed to inadequate reading skills. The course was organized and funded under the College of Education and Psychology with enrollment open to all students in the university. The Reading Center, which had previously concerned itself with graduate students specializing in reading, assumed the instructional responsibility for the course.

Developmental Reading is a required course for all entering freshmen who score at or below the twentieth percentile on the Diagnostic Reading Test, one of several instruments used in the freshmen placement program. In addition to this student category the program enrolls other students on an elective basis. There are four sections in the fall semester, two in the spring, and one in the summer. Each section is limited to approximately eighty students and these meet for two one-hour sessions per week for the duration of each semester for which one hour of credit is received.

Large sections necessitate organizing each section into three smaller groups for the purpose of instruction. Each group is identified by the code letters T, O, and M, with the T group being reserved for the more able readers, O for the average, and M for the least able. Placement in each group is based on the student's obtained rate and comprehension scores on the DRT. However, placement is not arbitrary; students are

encouraged to move to a more appropriate section if they feel the need. We feel the use of code letters tends to reduce the stigma attached to groups when they are based on ability.

Each group has its own filmed activity and own rate. Three student assistants are employed on a part-time basis. Their duties are to distribute the daily materials to the groups for which they are responsible. Classes meet for one hour with the first twenty minutes being used for a whole class activity and the remainder for filmed exercises. Answers are recorded on IBM answer sheets and are scored in time for the student to see at the next lesson. All material that is presented via machines is presented in a graduated rate scale. Material for group M is initially presented at 180 words per minute and increases to 300 wpm at the end of the semester. Material for group O is begun at 200 wpm and is increased to 360 wpm. Group T begins at 240 wpm and increases to 420 wpm.

For the purpose of research and mental measurements we use the Davis Reading Test and Otis Quick-Scoring Gamma. The Davis Test is given in three forms, A, B, and C. In addition to the initial pretest, it is also given at the mid-term, and at the conclusion of the course. The use of the Davis in three forms permits us to test at the ninth week of instruction. Our primary purpose for such a testing procedure is to determine in which nine-week interval the most gain occurs. This information will be used in deciding how long the course should be in the future. The use of the Otis is for correlating intelligence with both the DRT and Davis. The Davis and Otis are for the exclusive use of the Reading Center for research purposes. The DRT, to which we referred earlier, is the test administered by the General College and is that department's instrument used for screening and placement in the reading program. At the conclusion of the course one session is allocated to the General College to administer the alternate form of this test. At this time we are observing the comparative differences between scores on the Davis and DRT.

The course begins with an initial pretesting on the Davis and Otis after which the regular instructional program begins with study techniques developed around Robinson's SQ3R. Reading skills and rates appropriate for different purposes in study are also discussed. Lessons emphasize the need on the part of the student to form definite concepts about the differences among reading skills. We feel it is helpful to the student if he can learn to distinguish the unique characteristics of some of these skills. He needs to know how drawing conclusions is different from summarizing. Reading to make inferences, understand propaganda, detect moods, symbols and allegories are developed. Stress is placed on developing a flexible reading rate which is determined by purposes and the difficulty of the material read. The filmed material is that

published by the EDL Corporation which is designed to accompany the controlled readers.

An interesting observation of the student participants in the Eastern Program reveals the reading characteristics of the students to be the major factor in determining the instructional level of the program. Enrollment is weighted heavily in favor of those whose reading skills are below the minimum level necessary for successful completion of the school's academic program. What is this level? Research by the General College has found that where the DRT is used for correlation with GPA, that the twentieth percentile is the absolute minimum for predicting academic success.

Because the twentieth percentile is the level at and below which enrollment is required, one can appreciate why the course is weighted in favor of the poor reader. But the instructional level takes on another dimension when we examine the composition of this population by ratio. The ratio of those required to take the course opposed to those electing to take it is four to one. Another interesting observation we have concerns the sex distribution. The university ratio of males to females is approximately three to two, while the sex composition of the total reading program is four to one favoring males. This phenomena tends to conform to the national trend in which poor reading is more of a male characteristic. The specific effect these characteristics have on the program is to force the instructional level to be low and to weight the material in favor of male interests.

Do the reading and sex characteristics have an effect on the program? Yes--mostly undesirable. The undesirable effects which we suspect are influenced by our student composition are the lack of appeal of the course in attracting the brighter student who might readily profit from a higher level instruction. The course also tends to have some stigma attached to it as a result of its composition. There is reason to believe faculty attitude becomes rather fixed concerning who the course is for. There tends to be a general feeling on the part of the faculty that the course is more for the "needy" rather than everyone. It is the faculty that could do much in mitigating the stigmatic effect and encourage brighter students to at least create demand for a course more suited to their needs.

Having given a general description of the course, we shall turn now to some practical considerations which refer to some of the problems common to many programs of this type.

A major problem for us at Eastern is validating the extent to which our objectives are being achieved in terms of a measured change in reading performance. Let us illustrate the problem by referring to a comment made by an Eastern faculty member. "John, if you will take the reading course, you will learn to read better and can improve your grades." Haven't we

all heard this many times? Now this statement assumes two facts: it assumes participation in a reading program results in improved reading, and it assumes improved reading can be translated into better grades. And why not? Aren't these two objectives toward which we all strive? The problem to which we refer is that of validating these assumptions so that they may be realized as achievable objectives in which change in reading behavior can be effected.

The task of validation seems to us a responsibility essential to each program because objectives and outcomes differ from school to school. When we consider the differences in populations, skills taught, varying instructional time, and different teaching procedures we can see the necessity for research in the local situation to be quite essential. What about research already conducted by others? Why not use the evidence already revealed by others to give us encouragement in our own endeavors? It is very tempting bait to appropriate the work of others for our own use. This is especially true since the literature abounds in evidence which proves our assumptions to be valid. While the research of others is profoundly useful such a practice seems to have limitations. We must remember that the variety of test instruments and statistical designs used in other research projects coupled with different variables makes it a rather questionable practice to assume our conclusions to be the same as those of others. The research of others does not excuse us from our own responsibility in this task. The variance in populations and local grading standards are serious considerations that should make us quite cautious when these two assumptions are too freely held.

What are we attempting to do at Eastern to validate these assumptions? We are currently engaged in designing a research program which will give us answers to a few of the questions related to the assumptions we make. This is being done by enlisting the cooperation of statisticians and the computer program personnel. Relevant to our objectives we wish to know if our teaching treatment results in significant reading improvement and if there is a transfer of these skills resulting in higher GPA. Other questions we seek to answer are those related to the personality and social background characteristics that may influence reading improvement. This seems essential to us since some of the research already conducted probably reflects a college population drawn from a majority of urban dwellers and ours is quite different.

Our population is largely confined to rural and small town dwellers. To make the reading skills we teach related to the major objectives and the needs of the student we are planning a "skills need" survey for the fall of 1968. The English faculty has already identified one particular skill necessary in the literature course required of all students.

This particular skill is understanding symbolisms and allegories. Prior to this year this skill was not even mentioned in our reading program.

What about the instruments that measure these objectives? Perhaps you, like us, have a problem in determining whether your test instruments are true measurements of the teaching-learning objectives you attempt to carry out. We are considering the possibility of creating our own test which could be a better instrument for measuring those skills we identify for teaching. How many of us would be willing to confess we make our instructional material conform to a standardized test? Just a little bit, maybe?

The task of validating these two basic assumptions has some implications for what we might do collectively in the WCRA. It would seem quite possible that joint research projects are within our grasp which, when done collectively, might not be too great a burden individually. Within the limitations of research criteria we could engage in some cooperative descriptive research. As a possibility, we might administer the same tests over a wide geographical area and determine the personality characteristics of a large rather than a small population. This would have the advantage of pooling our population rather than having to be limited to rather limited ones.

SUMMARY

We have offered a description of the reading program at Eastern New Mexico University. The problems associated with our program are not necessarily unique, but one can see that different situations necessitate different approaches. Nor is ours an unusual program; it is just one more of the growing number of college reading courses. As we view it, there is a major task in the local programs to validate two assumptions relevant to our objectives. We need positive information concerning those factors influencing reading improvement, their degree of occurence, and whether this improvement is translated into better grades. To a large extent we each share in this problem, and caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from other research and applying it to our own situation. Finally, it is suggested that the direction we might take is through some joint research which will be of benefit to each of us in our common striving for information about the reading behavior of the college student.

The All School Reading Program at the Junior College Level

IRWIN JOFFE

Phoenix City College

Before one can understand the nature of the all school reading program at the Junior college level it is important to understand some of the basic philosophy of the junior college. There are two common misconceptions about this philosophy—one is that the junior college is an extension of the high school and the other is that the sole function of the junior college is to provide training for transfer into the four year college or university. Neither of these presumptions is entirely correct. The junior college is a multipurpose institution. It is a transfer school for those who plan a career requiring a degree from a four year school. It also provides terminal programs for those students who need developement of skills required for entry into occupations that demand less training than those prepared for in the four year college.

Another important insight into the junior college is that it is very often a community college with an "open door" policy. Academic admission requirements, therefore, are often minimal at best.

The reading needs of students at the junior college are as diverse as the courses of study that are offered. The basic premise of the junior college reading program then, is SERVICE. The reading personnel provides service on a variety of levels: service to students, service to college personnel (both faculty and administration), and service to the community. Let us examine this service in more detail.

Service to Students

Before one can meet the needs of students at the college level it is important to realize that there really aren't

reading levels as such—no one is on a freshman reading level or a sophmore reading level or even an eleventh or twelfth grade reading level. We don't judge how well a student reads by what grade he is in but, on the contrary, by the skills he has developed—skills in understanding, in memory, in critical evaluation, in following directions and in listening, to name a few. Reading skills are on a continuum from preschool to post graduate levels and are an ongoing process throughout life. Furthermore, they build upon and depend upon each other. One must initially develop some method for independently recognizing and understanding symbols (through perhaps phonetic analysis, morpheme analysix, vocabulary study, content clues and paragraph analysis) before one can, for example, critically analyze these materials. One must learn how to read with a specific purpose in mind before one can adequately adjust speed in reading and thus develop flexibility.

How does all of this affect the service that it is important for college reading teachers to provide? A good college reading program should provide service to students on all levels of the continuum. The program should meet the needs of students who are functioning at sub-college levels and are in need of remedial or corrective help. It should also provide for students who are able to handle college textbooks but who need sharpening up of skills in order to extract meaning from their texts effectively. In addition there should be provisions for the highly talented student at the upper levels of the continuum. These students learn critical evaluation and other communication skills that stand them in good stead all of their lives.

It should be noted here that all students do not have to be brought to the same level of efficiency. Different programs of instruction, different occupational goals demand different levels of efficiency in reading. It is the primary aim of the college's reading program to meet the need of the student, not necessarily to create the need. Certain occupational goals require less proficiency in reading than others. The interests of many students are such that they do not consider that reading will be a major activity in their life. While it is our duty to try to motivate interest in reading, it is not our duty to force the reading habit.

To summarize then, college reading teachers provide service to students by providing opportunities for skillful reading at all levels of the continuum.

Knowing what one wishes to accomplish is different from successfully accomplishing it. How does one successfully provide this kind of service to students? It seems to me that there must be an integration of two types of programs. Formal course work in combination with a laboratory approach is the ideal.

It is not possible to find two students who have identical

skill needs. It is impractical to meet students on a one-to-one basis even though it may be desirable. A fully equipped reading laboratory can at least approximate this ideal. I hasten to say that by a fully equipped reading laboratory I do not mean a hardware store. All too frequently, unfortunately, some of the best intentioned reading specialists physically equip an area with a horrendous display of equipment (pacers and scanners and viewers and projectors and recorders and boxes and measures of various kinds). They spend a lot of money. Then they tell students to come in and practice with this viewer or use that scanner or work with those boxes. Much practice material is provided, but no provision is made to teach skills. If the student has difficulty with the practice material, he is told to try easier material; he is still not taught the skill in question.

The laboratory approach that I am suggesting does have some hardware. It has tape recorders, some pacers, and much practice material divided according to skills. The tapes provide practice materials that are skill oriented. However, students are assigned to work in the reading laboratory only after they have been taught appropriate skills. They sign up for a formal college reading course and supplement the skill instruction taught in the course with skill practice in the laboratory. Close control is necessary. Difficulty with the practice exercise should result in further skill instruction. When the course is integrated and supplemented in this way the college can come closest to fully meeting individual needs.

There is one major flaw in this approach--diagnosis. I know of no standardized test that can adequately diagnose the skill levels of students. There are many tests on the market today that purport to do this testing--they don't. They are either too sophisticated for students with impoverished backgrounds or too academic for students who have academic problems or too elementary for older students. They concentrate on grade levels or percentiles rather than skill levels. Discovering that a student is at the 20th percentile tells me almost nothing about his skill difficulties. Did he earn such a low percentile because he has word attack problems, because he can't find main ideas in paragraphs or see relationships of ideas in reading materials or simply because he can't follow directions? The need for a truly diagnostic instrument is urgent.

Service to Teachers and Administrators

The all college reading programs also provide services to teachers and to the administration. Here are some of the ways in which this is done.

1. The reading instructor must also be a salesman and a public relations man. He must convince teachers of the value of the reading program as it relates to their discipline. He must show how reading skills can be integrated onto the content program and thereby help the content area teacher do a more effective job. How does he do this? One way is to convince the content area teacher that if his students have an effective method for study, they can learn his (the content teacher's) material more effectively. When the reading instructor has done this (whether he uses SQ3R, PQRST, PQ3R, or any other approach) he soon finds that referrals are made to him by other teachers. He has then given service to both the content area teacher and the student.

2. Readability

Sometimes a conscientious department at the junior college is concerned that a proposed textbook adoption is not the "right" one for their students. It has already happened that these people then, will ask the reading personnel for a readability study. The reading department can be of service here by doing this study and also by analyzing the textbook for such things as format (Will SQ3R work well?), style of writing, amenability to outlining, etc.

May I hasten to point out that service of this kind is helpful and meaningful only when solicited by other parties involved. The reading department is performing a service only when they act in response to a felt and expressed need. Otherwise negative feelings can be aroused which can ultimately hurt the student.

Why does the reading department and not other departments go beyond its own courses and become involved in the total school curriculum in the ways suggested. Is it trying to build an empire? Does it have its own axe to grind? May I submit that a conscientious reading teacher who desires to be of service to his students has the prime responsibility of trying to help students do well in courses other than reading. The sole purpose for the existence of reading courses at the college level (or at any other level for that matter) is to teach skills needed for academic success in courses other than reading. Even if he looks like an ogre to other departments, it is the reading department's job to involve itself in the reading material used in other courses. Of course, if in doing so he alienates himself, he negates his very purpose. Therefore he must go out of his way to establish rapport with other departments.

This makes the reading teacher a strange and hardy breed. To try to enlist coordinated efforts for the students is a difficult task indeed.

Service to Community

A complete reading program at the community college level would be inadequate if there were no provisions made for community involvement. This is true even of the private college or the university. At Phoenix College, for example, we go all out to service the community. We do this in the following ways:

1. The Reading Institute

   Phoenix College has a reading clinic type of center where we service community members other than our regular students. We provide small group and individual instruction for elementary and high school students and adult poor readers whose reading abilities are not commensurate with the reading tasks which are required of them. Here an individualized diagnosis is done, using an informal reading inventory as its basis. Students are then assigned to relatively homogeneous groups (homogeneous according to skill needs first, age second) of no more than ten and usually fewer. Intensive, specialized instruction is then provided.

2. Industry Programs

   Personalized, tailor made courses are provided for firms in the area. These courses are designed to meet the specific, personal needs of the company involved. Practice materials as well as the skills taught are geared to the personal needs of the company.

3. Community Programs

   A third type of service involves offering courses to parents of public school children in which such things as the nature of the reading process is explained and suggestions are made for helping young children how to enjoy and to get more out of what they read. Through courses such as these rapport with the community and understanding of the regular college program is enhanced. This, in turn, can lead to better support for education in general and reading in particular.

4. Other Important Considerations

Change is constant. A sound reading program must be aware of new developments in the field. Stress should be placed on visitation—both to other communities where reading programs are in operation, and to professional meetings such as this one where interchange of ideas can lead to better teaching.

Teaching College Phonics at City College of San Francisco

GRACE M. BROWN

City College of San Francisco

Since I am quite narcissistic, or so my friends have told me, I sometimes feel uneasy about being asked, with increasing frequency, to talk on the subject of "Phonics" at college reading conferences. I am a little concerned about what it may be doing to my professional image. While I am convinced that "Phonics" is a basic problem at the junior college level, I do not want to become known only as the "Phonics Queen of the Junior College Reading Clubs," since "Phonics" is really not my concept of what reading is about. Recently, one of my esteemed colleagues in the English Department of City College of San Francisco suggested that I be made "Chairman of the Department of Verbal Confusion." Again, while I am schizzy enough to thoroughly enjoy that particular title, I can not help wondering what effect this, too, if taken seriously, might have on what I am basically trying to accomplish in the field of reading.

In recent years, and this has crystallized out of the more than twenty years in which I have been engaged in trying to help students to read better, I have become convinced that what should be done in reading classes, especially at the junior college level, is, essentially, to make the poor reader aware of what the act of reading is, to convince him that it is not an unnecessary, esoteric piece of behavior imposed on him by authorities from above, but is merely one way among other ways of connecting with the real world, of finding out more about life, to convince him that through reading he can discover realities about people, things, and ideas that he would not, could not, have learned otherwise.

This is a matter of great concern to me. It seems to me that, more and more, in our junior college reading courses, we get too involved, almost bogged down, in what I would call the "study skills" complex; we work diligently and faithfully

with our students in the areas of improving comprehension, rate, flexibility, and the like; we teach them how to analyze paragraphs and sentences, how to pre-read, survey, ask questions, look for answers. . . . These skills are, of course, all valuable and necessary for the college student, even essential for his survival. All of them, however, as I see it, have to do with "applied" reading, as against what I would call "pure" reading--that simple but magical way of taking in the real world indirectly through the eyes and mind of another person--a person, however, who is not there, who may not even be alive, but who has left pictures of his way of seeing and sizing up the world in words upon the page. And it is this concept of "pure" reading that, in our efforts to meet the student's academic needs, we tend to lose sight of. I believe, however, that if the reading-recalcitrant student is ever to become "converted" to reading as a way of life, he must be brought to see it for what it truly is, an activity that, like talking and television, has to do strictly with an outside world of people and things seen through the eyes of another.

It is often surprisingly easy to communicate this concept of reading to the student. Sometimes, all that it takes to convert him is to give him sufficient opportunity in the classroom to take those empty words he has just read, and translate them, phrase by phrase, into his own experience, reproduce in phantasy the sensations, feelings, pictures, even body movements, that are described. Once he has learned to do this he can learn to develop similar reality equivalents in dealing with concepts. But this concept of "reading for reality" demands that the reader be fully aware that what is spread out upon the page is the content of another person's mind, not his own. It is often easy, even for the experienced reader, to forget that this is so, that what is on the page is as much outside his own mind, as much a part of the external world, as distinct and separate from him as is the food he eats, the chair he sits on, the neighbor he talks to. Gray's much-quoted statement that the reader "brings meaning to the printed page" is alas, for many readers too often all too true. They bring their own meanings with them, reconstructing the text freely as they read. Because they do not differentiate sharply enough between the inner subjective reality of their own thoughts and the objective reality of the book, they tend to regard the printed page merely as an extension of their own minds, a convenient surface on which to project their own thoughts and ideas. At the very least, they require that the author move over and share the page space with them, so that what is ultimately lodged in their minds and memories after they have read is all too often a confused hodge-podge of two sets of ideas poured into one. This, of course, is not reading, in any true sense of

the word.

At this point you are undoubtedly asking, "What does this have to do with 'Phonics'?" Perhaps what I have been saying is merely a side-excursion. However, essentially it is, I feel, highly relevant. The importance of "Phonics" for college reading is that without a knowledge (and also a consistent application) of the decoding system of phonic analysis, accurate reading is simply not possible. Only if the reader has mastered the exact relationships between the letters of written words and the sounds of spoken words, can he read reasonably objectively and with a minimum of distortion of content. The student who was taught originally by the "Look-Say" method and who has either never acquired phonetic skills or does not make use of them in his reading is far more likely to pour the milk of his own ideas into the coffee of the writer's--with a perhaps bland but often meaningless mixture resulting.

When I was asked to talk on "Teaching College Phonics," the title at first struck me as rather strange. Why "college phonics," why not just "Phonics?" But the more I thought about it, the more I realised its correctness. Teaching "college phonics" is different from teaching beginning phonics to young children. Perhaps the most important difference lies in the fact that at the college level a process of unlearning must take place before learning can begin. The student's existing perceptual patterns in reading, his ways of seeing words on the page, must be completely restructured. His perception of each word as a single visual whole must be broken down and his visual experience reorganized so that he learns to perceive and respond to the smaller units of letters and letter combinations within words which correspond to the speech sounds of the language. But, to many of these students, a word is a word is a word; it can only be recognized and pronounced in its totality. At first some students not only refuse, they are unable to break a word down into its component parts--to do so would mean the break-down, not only of the word, but of their whole existing system of "coping" in reading, and, inadequate though this system has proved to be, the thought of tampering with it is too threatening. And yet, if they do not consent to learn to analyze words, both those they know and those they do not, they will never be able to develop an independent approach to the mastery of new words, and will never really be able to read.

There are, of course, other differences between "college" and beginning phonics instruction, such as the need to deal with the confirmed negativism, often amounting to outright hatred towards reading, that may have been built up in the college student through the years. Or there may be a complete acceptance of failure; this also has to be dealt with. The

college-age "functional illiterate" may simply see reading as something that is just not for him, something he will never be able to do, and he is willing to let it go at that. For this reason a completely new approach, a shock treatment--"word-calling" at its crassest for example, or deciphering nonsense material--is often the best, sometimes the only, way to reach him. So "college phonics" may rightly be considered as something different from beginning phonics.

Let me now overview briefly the rest of what I want to say. I would like to talk about:

1. The Students: Who is to be taught phonics? How many students at the junior college level need instruction in phonics and how are they to be identified? What are the students who are enrolled in a junior college phonics class like? What might their hang-ups be as far as learning is concerned?

2. The Teachers: Who is to do the teaching? What do teachers need to know to teach a course in college phonics? What might their hang-ups be as far as teaching phonics is concerned?

3. Content and Method: What should be taught in a course in college phonics and how should it be taught? What methods and materials are appropriate and effective at a college level?

The Student

Adequate preliminary diagnosis is essential. The students enrolled in a college phonics class, 1) must need it, and 2) must be grouped for instruction according to the degree of deficiency. Until relatively recently, adequate diagnosis was a time-consuming and somewhat impractical process because students had to be tested individually. But this is no longer the case. The California Phonics Survey, of which I am co-author with Dr. Alice Cottrell, is a valid, reliable, diagnostic instrument that can be given to groups of up to 50 students at a time, and that can be machine-scored. It has diagnostic sub-keys that indicate specific areas of phonic deficiency. The test correlates in the sixties with college-level tests of silent reading comprehension. Since accurate word perception of itself is obviously not a sufficient condition for competence in

reading, this is, of course, a highly significant correlation. When this test is given to a junior college population for the purpose of selecting those who need instruction in phonics, we find four groups of students emerging:

1. A group of "functional illiterates"—students who cannot read well enough even to take jobs as delivery boys, certainly not well enough to pass Civil Service examinations for jobs as policemen, firemen, Post Office employees, etc., or ever to read for pleasure. This group may include as many as ten to fifteen per cent of a typical junior college population. In some cases, the percentage will be even higher.

2. A group who can "read all right," as they see it, but who in reality read only from a limited sight vocabulary and have no way of deciphering unfamiliar words. These students can get meaning from their reading "when it is interesting," or when the content is familiar, but they bog down completely in difficult or unfamiliar material. (That, of course, includes most of their textbooks.) Thirty to forty per cent of a typical junior college population may be included in this group.

3. A group who have adequate knowledge of phonic analysis but do not make use of it in their reading. They tend to substitute familiar for unfamiliar, expected for unexpected words as they read. Since they are usually unaware of what they are doing, they attribute their reading incompetence to "poor comprehension," "inability to concentrate," "material too boring," and the like, without ever having any idea that it is their inaccurate reading that is at the root of their problem.

4. A group who reads words accurately and have no need of any kind of instruction in word attack skills. This "in the clear" group may in some junior colleges comprise less than twenty-five per cent of the population.

What are the students in a college phonics class like? What are their learning hang-ups?

I will describe the students enrolled in our "Phonics for Reading and Spelling" course at City College of San Francisco. At City College we not only offer a specific course designed to teach this desperately needed, low-level mechanical skill that tends to get ignored or pushed under the rug in many places; we label it openly for what it is. At City College,

in fact, not only do we have a phonics course; we have it at two levels. Some of what I will say, especially with regard to elementary letter or sound discrimination, will apply only to the low-level group, but, essentially, the description of the quality of the students and the attitudes prevailing in the classroom applies to both groups. These students are an interesting mixture; some of them are sons and daughters of people in the professions and from upper socio-economic levels; some are school drop-outs, some, high school graduates coming back to school because "they can't get anywhere without a better education," some, serious, intellectually well-disciplined, foreign-born. All the local minority groups--Blacks, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish-Americans--are well represented. These young people--they are not all young, by the way--tend to be very much live wires; once the ice is broken the classes can be tremendous fun; there is a quality of warmth, quickness, enthusiasm, and native intelligence about many of them that usually carries along the more lethargic minority. Their ignorance of the language is, of course, amazing. It is not alone the low vocabulary level. Even the native-born do not understand the idiom of the language. They do not recognize the most obvious metaphors. One boy, for example, asked to explain: "He brought his native sweetness with him," shrugged, "I guess it means he brought candy along." "Windows ablaze with light"?. . . "The house was on fire." But this kind of thing goes on in all remedial reading classes. These students have other problems; they do not hear even the simplest words accurately; they do not say them accurately; they do not read letters accurately. The words they know, they know as wholes only. One of these students may, for instance, be able to read and say such words as critical, blanket, scribble, but he cannot either read or say -itical, -lanket, or scrib-; he cannot even get his tongue around the syllables to repeat them accurately after the instructor. These students cannot hear and resist, sometimes violently, learning to hear, the separate speech sounds within a syllable. On the other hand, in a weird reversal of this--and because all their cues are tied to the visual--with words that are familiar to them in writing and reading they make auditory discriminations that do not exist. A student will take ten minutes of class time trying to convince you that there is a difference in sound between passed and past, between wrecks and Rex; that there is an l sound in walk, a "buh" at the end of comb, a t in clutch that is not in such. And half the class will agree with him. They will fight you every inch of the way. They will resist analysing a word they know at sight, but will be angry if you ask them to work with nonsense syllables. Why waste time on them when there are so many real words to learn! (In fact, they insist on turning every nonsense word they are asked to work with into a real word; this in itself is a rather pathetic

demonstration of what they have been doing with unfamiliar words all their reading life.) They have other idiosyncracies. But . . . they can be taught, and taught, I believe, most quickly and efficiently by a phonics method, using a combination of sense and nonsense material . . . if it is done in the right way.

The Teachers

The teachers are in some ways a greater problem than the students. The average English teacher, and often even the college remedial reading teacher, shies away from teaching a phonics course, just as the average administrator usually refuses to include a group phonics test in the entrance battery, even though a reliable test exists. Teachers and administrators alike are afraid to face the ugly reality of the enormous extent of the problem. The administrator does not want the situation pinned down, because he does not know what to do about it. The remedial reading instructor avoids teaching phonics because he feels he does not know how to teach it. (In part, he may have been scared away by the assemblage of unnecessary and often completely inaccurate rules that pass in many teachers' handbooks for "phonics." In one highly respected and "authoritative" text on reading that I examined recently, there is a section of almost one hundred pages devoted to phonics rules and the teaching of phonics, that is, in large part, a bewildering array of inaccurate gobbledygook.) But I think that, more than anything, the reading instructor avoids phonics because he, like everyone else, resists change. And he often seems to have considerable justification for this. The teacher who is successfully involved with the remedial students, who does get students interested, who does improve their skills so that they become better readers, would quite naturally rather stay with the tried-and-true methods he is familiar with. These methods, combined with the "tender loving care" he is so willing and able to give, have shown enough success with enough students that he feels he can afford to dismiss the failures--those who don't rise to his bait--as more or less "unteachables." You can't win them all! And perhaps he is justified. But where the failure is due, not to the student's tie-ups, but to an inadequate or inappropriate teaching method, this is a situation that demands to be remedied. For there is more involved here than the mere matter of discounting the obvious, recognized failures. (What teacher, to save his sanity, can afford not to.) The instructor usually remains unaware that, even with his "successes", a ceiling on ultimate achievement has been imposed in those cases where faulty word recognition patterns still exist and have not been corrected. The intel-

ligent student who is not reading accurately may always, even though his "grade-level" tests register considerable improvement, have serious, perhaps insurmountable, problems when he has to deal with difficult or unfamiliar material.

Is the junior college teacher's general disinterest in and refusal to cope with the "phonics problem" on the plea of ignorance of the subject justified? Actually, it is not. While "love is not enough," it is almost enough for the teaching of phonics. All that is required, beyond his already existing competence in the language, he can very easily acquire. He must, of course, be, or become, thoroughly conversant with the phonogram code, which he may be applying automatically in his reading without a formal knowledge of the rules. These are spelled out in sufficient detail to give him adequate guidance in the workbook, "Letters, Sounds, and Words," in an outline that has been simplified to the bare minimum. With the help of such an outline, the teacher can fill in any gaps in his "phonic knowledge" as he goes along. Beyond that, there are perhaps four other requirements: 1) an organized sequence to follow in his teaching, 2) adequate supporting material in the way of supplementary tapes, suggestions for teaching devices, tests and exercises, 3) a small enough class size to be able to reach each student, and 4) adequate time to do the job. The first two are met with reasonable adequacy by our workbook; the last two, of course, are dependent on the attitudes and policies of the school administration.

Content and Method

What is a phonics method, and what is the "right way," better, one right way, to teach these students? What must they learn so that they will be able to function closer to their native intelligence in their reading?

The first thing to be done is to clarify for them the nature of the relationship between written words and spoken words. The student must be brought to realize that a single-sounding word or syllable is actually made up of a group of separate speech sounds, that our whole language operates on a very small number of these speech sounds (about forty in all), and that the thousands and thousands of words that are spoken by people and written in books are all built up out of this very small number of "interchangeable parts" of sound. (For example, God and dog are made up of the same three speech sounds, arranged in a different order; stick and stethescope have their first two speech sounds in common; spasm and enthusiasm end with the same three speech sounds.) Then he must realize that written words are made up of an equivalent group of "interchangeable parts"--the letters and letter-combinations (phonograms) that are used in writing them.

These are nothing more than the individual units of a code that represents in writing these interchangeable parts of the spoken words. All that the student has to do to learn to read words as well as, or even better than he can speak them, is to master this code, and if at the same time he can learn to master the dictionary pronunciation of symbols, then he has it made, as far as the mechanics of reading words is concerned.

Once this approach to learning to read words has been accepted; once the student has realized that by learning the sight-sound code, by learning to relate the "interchangeable parts" of letters in written words to the "interchangeable parts" of sounds in spoken words, he can learn to read all words at once, instead of having to struggle with each one individually. Then he is really on his way, and interest and motivation in the phonics classes are usually assured.

Next, of course, the student has to learn the specifics of the code, so that he knows which phonograms represent which speech sounds, and before he is through, he must have mastered them so thoroughly that he identifies them automatically, and can return to the pattern of perceiving words as wholes, but with this difference: Now the words that come into his head as he reads are the words that the writer had in mind as he wrote.

How is the phonogram code to be mastered by the student so that he can apply it to words in books?

In the workbook used in the phonics course at C.C.S.F. there is a list of seventy-six phonograms. Each phonogram is accompanied by its dictionary pronunciation symbol (symbols, if it represents more than one speech sound) and examples of its use in common words. The first thing we do in the course is bring this list to the attention of the students and inform them that this IS the code, that on this one page is everything they need to know to be able to read any word in the language. We explain that the code is not a matter of a completely simple, one-to-one relationship between letters and sounds, that there are some complications and some exceptions, but we also make clear that once the job is done, it is done; learning to read is not, or need not be, an interminable process of forever struggling along through pages of books, struggling first with one word, then with another to the end of one's days.

With this introduction, we, and they, then go to work. Needless to say, a great deal of work, much thoughtful, patient teaching, and massive quantities of organized drills are necessary before anything considerable can be accomplished. The work and the drills can and must be fun. The classroom atmosphere must be relaxed so that the whole thing becomes a game. (In fact, a great deal can be accomplished in the form of games and with amusing sense-nonsense material.) This does

not preclude periodic crackdowns, when needed, to keep the students delivering their quota of work. These are necessary because, while in the classroom itself there is rarely any trouble with interest and motivation, it often is a problem to get the students to do enough consistent independent work on the outside.

The drills and exercises for the phonics course have all been planned to impart to the student not only the specific "phonic facts" he needs for reading, but also certain general insights he must acquire if he is to restructure his concept of the "reading task." As a rule, these insights are acquired only gradually and at separate moments by each student as he works along and only after innumerable repetitions and variations in presentation. We will describe the most important of them.

1. He must understand and accept the basic concept of the nature of the relationship between speaking, writing, and reading already introduced in connection with the phonogram page. Writing is a visual code that represents with letters the individual speech sounds of words; reading is a matter of decoding these letters into speech sounds; the units of the code are the phonograms; all written words are made up from these units and can be broken down into these separate parts.

2. He must also understand that the relationship between letters and speech-sounds is not completely one-to-one. For example, while some phonograms represent only one sound, others can double for several sounds; the letter c may represent the (k) sound, as it does in the word c a t , or the (s) sound as it does in the word c i t y ; the letter g can stand for either the "hard" (g) sound as it does in the word g o, or the "soft" (j) sound as it does in the word g e n t l e. Again, while some phonograms are written with just one letter, over half of them are special combinations of letters which the student must learn to recognize as units. This is relatively easy to do in the case of the speech sounds for which we have no alphabet letter—the sound (ch) as in ch e e s e , for example, the sound (sh) as in s h o e , or the sound (oi) as in b o i l . It is harder when the same two letters are used with equal frequency either as two separate phonograms, or as one single phonogram unit. Compare, for example, the sounds of the two phonograms a and w in the word a w a y with the sound represented by the single two-letter phonogram aw (o) in the word l a w ; or the sounds of the two phonograms t and i in the word t i m e with the single phonogram ti (sh) in the word s t a t i o n .

3. The student must understand why it is that, while there are only about forty speech sounds in our language, there are

at least seventy-five phonograms. Obviously this must mean that some sounds can be written in more than one way. This, of course, is true. The sound (k), for example, can be written with the phonogram k, as in k i s s , with the phonogram c as in c a t , or with the phonogram ch, as in c h o r u s . It will help him to understand that one reason for this lies in the fact that our language is not of single origin but is a composite of several languages, each with its own phonogram system, and that English spelling, when it finally settled down, in many cases retained the original spelling of words it had absorbed from other languages. For example, in words that come from the Greek, the (k) sound will be written with a ch, as in c h o r d , or C h r i s t . It must be made clear, however, that, while this has obscured, it has in no way destroyed the essential consistency of the relation between the letters of written words and the sounds of spoken words. It has made it a more complex relationship, so that more time will be required for the student to master the system and make full and free use of it in reading.

4. Another essential insight that must be acquired is the realization that to represent spoken words accurately on paper, the phonogram code must have some way of indicating the temporal sequence, the first...second...third...last order in which the separate speech sounds of a word are uttered. This is of course essential; compare the difference in total sound that arises solely from the difference in the sequence of the individual sounds in such words as last-slat, oils-soil, god-dog, silver-sliver. The code takes care of this very simply. The separate phonograms in each word must be re-translated into speech sounds in the exact order in which they have been set down on the page, starting from the left and proceeding to the right. Extraordinary as it may seem, many readers who learned by the whole-word method are completely unaware of this fact. Simple visual demonstrations in the classroom, using large cardboard letters, to show how one word can be turned into another merely by shifting the order of the letters are very effective. They leave some students completely astounded.

5. There is one other insight or fact of reading life that must be acquired by the sight reader before he can put the pieces of the phonic puzzle together satisfactorily and reconcile the discrepancies between this new "interchangeable parts" system of reading, at least to some degree, with his old, whole-word method. This is the concept of what we call in our college classroom "delinquent words," a term accepted and enjoyed by the students. "Delinquent words" are those words in the language "that don't follow the rules and make trouble for everybody." These are the non-phonetically

spelled words. Among them are many of the words in common use that were earlier presented to the child in an initial "sight vocabulary." It is explained to the student that there is nothing wrong with acquiring such a sight vocabulary, that it amounts, in fact, to a "must" as part of a beginning reading program. What may have been wrong in many cases was the timing of its presentation. If the common non-phonetic sight words are presented before the basic principles of the sight-sound code have been mastered, it is usually much harder, sometimes almost impossible, for a reader to operate successfully with the phonetic code later on.

We repeat; these insights are only developed slowly and gradually throughout the course, but they must be communicated and accepted if the students are to have any real success in restructuring their reading habits.

A question arises. If, as we stated earlier, many students cannot discriminate between many of the speech sounds, are unable to pronounce them correctly, and do not perceive the letters in written words accurately, how on earth is it going to be possible to teach them to read by a specific, sight-sound decoding system? Many reading specialists, indeed, believe that in this situation a phonics method is entirely inappropriate. We have found, however, on the contrary, that it is the most appropriate method, if it is done in the right way. One of the secrets is to work with all possible sense modalities at once, operating simultaneously with seeing, saying, hearing, and writing activities on the same material. Auditory and visual discrimination are developed much more rapidly when perception through one sensory channel is reinforced by other sensory channels. This can be done in a number of different ways. By putting the exercise material in our workbook on tape and by numbering the individual items to match the exercises in the text, we have made it possible for the student, even when he is working independently, to see and hear, say and hear, hear and say, hear and write, or use any other combination of behaviors on any portion of the material. To give an example: for a "See-Say-Hear" combination, the student opens his workbook to the correct exercise page, hears the number of the first item called on the tape, looks at the word or syllable next to that number, and during the brief pause that follows on the tape, he says that item to himself. Then he listens to the tape voice saying it, to find out whether or not he pronounced it correctly. If he does not know the sounds at all, he may at first just read along, listening to the tape. This is a simple "see-hear" operation.

The dictation tapes (the hear-write-see activities) are set up with the pause coming after the word or phrase, so that the student can write down what he has heard. When the tape exercise is finished, he refers to the appropriate pages and

numbers in the workbook to "see" the words and check his work.

The content of the exercises is extremely varied. The phonics groundwork is laid by having the students first of all attempt to learn the phonograms, a few at a time, and relate them to the spoken sounds and the dictionary symbols, according to the scheme on the phonogram page. Then they learn to identify these phonograms within words and syllables. For this, they do such exercises as "stripping" words, phonogram by phonogram, down to the central vowel sound and conversely, "building" them up, phonogram by phonogram, from the central vowel sound.

Examples of "stripping." The students say:

c a t, ~~c~~ a t, a ~~t~~, a

c h a t, ~~c h~~ a t, a ~~t~~, a

s q u a w, ~~s q~~ a w, q u a w, a w (o)

Examples of "building." The students say:

o (o) op, t o p, s t o p

o o, (o o) o o t, s h o o t

With some students, what we call the "Square and Circle" method of word analysis is extremely effective. I will describe it very briefly. In this system all the letters in a word must be accounted for in units of sound. All vowel phonograms are enclosed in a circle, (c (a) t, h (i g h)); all consonant phonograms in a square, ([s h] o [p], [st] a [t i] o n); silent letters are crossed out: l a m ~~b~~, l a m ~~e~~. Below each phonogram, the student writes the appropriate dictionary symbol for its use in that word.

Besides the phonogram page there are five basic drill pages, one for each vowel letter, and these in a sense form the core of the workbook. Each of these pages has a numbered list of all the consonants and consonant blends, with examples, and opposite it, a numbered list of syllables beginning with the same vowel. An example of part of one page is reproduced below:

1.	B	... baby, bag	1.	-ace	... face
2.	BL	... blue, blow	2.	-auce	... sauce
3.	BR	... brown, bring	3.	-ack	... sack
4.	C	... cat, cook	4.	-ad	... sad

5. CH ... cheese, chorus 5. -ade ... made

By combining items on the left with items on the right, the student not only learns where the sounds in words come from, he also learns the sounds and the spellings of the long and short vowels and of the other vowel sounds and of the beginning consonant blends.

Because every item on the page is numbered and the material is also reproduced on tape, there are unlimited possibilities for drill exercises. We will give a few examples. Directed by the spoken numbers, the student can be instructed to pronounce any combination of sounds from the two sides of the page. He then listens to the tape or to the voice of the instructor to hear if he was right, and may, in addition, be given such tasks as to decide whether the combination is:

1) a real word correctly spelled. The combination 2-3, for example, will give the word bl-ack. (black)

2) the sound but not the correct spelling of a real word. The combination 4-1, for example, will give C-ace, the sound but not the spelling of the real word case.

3) a nonsense syllable. The combination 2-2, for example, will give the nonsense syllable Bl-auce.

He may be asked to find the numbers of the combination which would spell the sound of a word or syllable spoken by the instructor and then write down that word, or to find two items that would make a real word if a particular suffix were added; 4-3, for example, plus the suffix -le will give the word cackle.

He can be asked to find two spellings for the same real or nonsense word. And so, ad infinitum, as far as straight phonics drills are concerned. But, since all of our drill work, even when it begins with mechanical word-calling, is designed to lead into sense and meaning, and where possible, even into conceptual thinking, there are other exercises of quite a different kind, such as finding combinations that will make appropriate words for sentence fill-ins: Example: She wore a _____ dress (answer: 2-3, black). Or a student may be asked to find combinations that will make words belonging to specific conceptual categories, such as time, space, emotion, movement, etc. The level of difficulty of the exercises can be stepped up or down at will; once an instructor has caught on to the system, they are very easy to improvise. In fact, some elementary teachers have been making their own adaptations from these vowel sheets as far down as the third grade level and reporting great success with them.

Before giving a brief list of some of the other types of exercises, I would like to say a word about the use of nonsense

material. Nonsense material is essential because, with words he knows by sight, the student tends to by-pass the task of analyzing their phonograms. On the other hand, to begin with at least, he usually resists working with unreal words. The thought in his mind is, "Why bother with nonsense words when there are so many real words to be mastered?" Again, the solution lies in leading from nonsense back into sense. Once the student realizes from the drill work that any one nonsense word, such as sol, for example, can be part of dozens of real words, (cf. solitary, consolidate, solace, solid, solemn, insoluble, solitaire, consol, etc.), and that once he knows how to pronounce sol correctly, he will be able to pronounce it in any of these words, then he usually accepts the rationale of working with "nonsense" as a shortcut to learning to read sense. However, this acceptance must constantly be reinforced by other nonsense-into-sense exercises all along the line. I will list a few:

1. The student may be asked to look for specific nonsense syllables within real words. (cf. sol above), or to find words containing these syllables in the dictionary, or in magazines, books, or newspapers.

2. He may be asked to determine, by listening only, (later he will be asked to read and to write from dictation), which of a choice of two or more sentences makes sense, and which are nonsense:

   Examples: a) It was hill on the hell.
   b) It was hell on the hill.

   a) The crock ticked away.
   b) The clock thicked away.
   c) The clock ticked away.

   These are excellent exercises for developing auditory discrimination. Incidentally, we have discovered that, when the material is presented in this way, the student's auditory discrimination is, as a rule, far sharper than is usually believed.

3. He may be given phonetically spelled material to read aloud and then to re-write in correct spelling.

   Example: "Wun deigh igh sau uh strainj cite..."
   (One day I saw a strange sight.)

4. Another exercise consists of rearranging the "scrambled" syllables of words in simple sentences.

Example: The (tion de a clar) of (de in ence pend) is a famous (u ment doc).

5. In the "Reversed Consonants" exercises, he is asked, without being allowed to write anything down, to transfer the beginning consonants (in other exercises, the final consonants) from one word to another in a series of phrases and then to classify the phrases according to their meaning. (These exercises, like many of the others, can be machine-scored.)

Example: Without writing anything down, reverse the beginning consonants in the following phrases in your mind. Then mark out the appropriate letter according to whether the phrase

A refers to people - B refers to food - C is nonsense:

Chacon and beese	A)	B)	C)	
Birls and goys	A)	B)	C)	
Voundrels and scrillains	A)	B)	C)	(the reversal yields scroundrels.)

6. Another intriguing exercise, which can be developed in all kinds of ways and at all levels of difficulty, is "code-cracking."

Examples: Code I. Thi loun os thi kong uf biests.
The lion is the king of beasts.

Code II. Nasy jaf a mivvme manc.
Mary had a little lamb.

(I will leave to you the challenge of breaking these codes. I assure you, however, we do not leave the students in suspense for too long.)

In Exercises 5 and 6, additional "phonics mileage" can be obtained by having the students attempt to read the exercise material aloud before going to work on the exercise itself.

The above are just a few samples of the variations in the material that we have prepared: they should be sufficient to illustrate the system we have developed for helping these "functional illiterates" make better use of their native intelligence in their reading.

So far I have said nothing about our use of the dictionary, although work with the dictionary comprises a large part of the course. In fact, we use it as a supplemental workbook,

and one of the stated requirements (which, however, we may modify in individual cases) for obtaining a passing grade is that the student be able, with the help of the pronunciation symbols, to read any word anywhere in the dictionary, whether or not he understands its meaning and whether or not he has ever seen it before.

If this be word-calling, make the most of it! It is... and it works.

Teaching College Phonics at American River College

BARBARA OAKMAN

American River College

I hate reading! Fiction is no good; you don't learn anything from it! How often have we heard these and similar comments from our students? Do we read only to LEARN something? Don't we EVER read for pleasure, for enjoyment, to travel vicariously in time and place? Must we always read in connection with a particular class? Can't we learn to read for the sheer joy of it? Perhaps the answer is that none of us really likes to do what is difficult for us, whether it be reading, swimming, sewing, gardening, or anything else.

We first become acquainted with our students after they have had twelve or more years of school and work. They are fairly well set in their habits and find it difficult to change them. The student just out of high school is usually bewildered by the seemingly free atmosphere of the college campus. No instructor is sitting on top of him to make sure his work is done and in on time. For many of these students, their entrance into college is the first time they have had to shoulder responsibility for their own work. The older student, who has returned to college after completing military service or after working for several years, has an adjustment of a different sort. Is he able to compete with the younger students? Can he hold his own? Can he make the necessary changes in his habits which will help him to benefit more from a college program?

As instructors, we are sometimes told that we are "to teach remedial reading," but is this what we should be teaching? Are we not, rather teaching students to improve their reading? The emphasis is different, and therefore, our approach will be different.

Over the past several years throughout the nation, many methods have been propounded. There is the linguistics method, look-say method, responsive-environment method, programmed

learning method, basic method, Montessori method, language expression method, and many others. The deploring result of all these methods, however, is that each one of us here today still has a basic responsibility - teaching students how to read, because they didn't learn how when they were in the elementary grades. Jeanne S. Chall, an educational psychologist at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has recently completed and published a three-year study of basal readers and methods of teaching reading throughout the United States, and reports that the most commonly used texts are seriously limited in vocabulary and content, and the most successful teaching method - phonics - is the least used.

Since there is little or no research on college remedial reading, particularly in the field of phonics instruction, we must take what research there is on the elementary level and adapt it for our students.

There are many students in our colleges who have little or no knowledge of the sounds involved in their own language. For all practical purposes, they are functional illiterates. Their reading vocabularies have not expanded much beyond the fourth grade level, although their speaking vocabularies are frequently at a high school level or higher.

As a result of their handicap in not having knowledge of how to use sounds to help them in reading, these students find it difficult, if not impossible, to sound out a word, to attempt its pronunciation. They have difficulty in interpreting dictionary spelling and are unable to divide a word into syllables. Frequently they are confused by words that are similar in form, differing in only one or two letters.

We must remember that our students have been exposed to some of this information, and therefore, we are trying to teach for review and reinforcement, in many cases, rather than to teach a totally new concept as is done in the primary grades.

Reading, to the kindergartner, is a code - just as unintelligible as the Morse Code is to many of us. Unfortunately, to many of our college students, reading is almost as unintelligible to them today as it was to them several years ago. It is our task, therefore, to help them decipher this code. Therefore, while avoiding the use of any one method of teaching reading over the course of the semester, we start where the students need to begin - by helping them break the code of the written word - the alphabet. Most college students can recite the alphabet, but few of them can use it effectively. They do not know the letters out of order and have little idea of the sounds associated with the various letters. So start with a review of the alphabet. Have them write it. This way you will find out which students do not know their letters in sequence, and there are some. Then give them exercises to alphabetize by second, third, and even fourth letter. Both

students and instructor will then know who can utilize the alphabet and who can't. From this point, the instructor can then lead the student into a study of the sounds of the various letters as well as unlocking the meanings of the words after he is able to read them.

Throughout all of this study, the key factor is the instructor's attitude. If the instructor realizes that this information is what the students need, and the instructor accepts, wholeheartedly, the need for teaching it, the students will accept the need for learning it. The students will not think this study beneath them; rather, they will see it as a clue to deciphering the mysteries of the printed page.

Phonics, by definition, is the use of sound symbols in teaching reading and pronunciation. It can be a valuable tool for the college remedial reader, although not the only one. Perhaps it would be wise to say that phonics is merely a launching pad, to help the student acquire a basic knowledge of the sounds of their language in order to lead them to the use of other skills which will prove more effective and more efficient as they travel in the outer spaces of reading.

In reality, phonics, as such, should not be emphasized in college. Drills of cat, fat, and rat, and other similar ones are too reminiscent of the elementary school, and are apt to alienate the college student from the reading program. This is not to say that college students do not need this work, but it can be better approached through the use of unusual words or homonyms, such as maid-made, main-mane, pear-pair-pare, bait-bate, and others which contain the phonetic element being taught, or even through the use of nonsense words, so that the students learn to rely on sound rather than on previously learned spelling.

Reading experts such as Betts, Gray, Durrell and others, believe that reading is essentially the process of attaching meaning to written symbols and that any instruction should be to that end. Any analysis of word elements begins and ends with the wholeness of the word. This is in sharp contrast to a so-called pure phonics system in which the students are taught to combine the sounds of the various letters into phonetic units, without respect to the unitary nature of the reading process.

Chall, on the other hand, believes that pure phonics should be taught, at least until the students are aware of the sounds and their variations, and further, she believes that the guidebooks accompanying basal readers do not stress phonics instruction as much as they should. It is further noted in her book that since most guidebooks include far more material than any one teacher can possibly handle for any one story, the teacher usually stresses meaning rather than what is to be read. It is interesting to note that Dr. M. W. Sullivan also believes that the basal readers are not being used

correctly, and he further believes that they are written far below the student's interest level. Thus, his series of books is designed to present both the phonetic and unitary approaches by means of a series of programmed reading texts which have been written at a higher interest level than most basal readers are. Although Dr. Sullivan's books are written for the first three grades, his philosophy can be well-taken for the colleges: a student can learn anything if he knows you won't trick him.

As I have stated, the unitary approach to reading generally emphasizes the comprehension and sight-word recognition skills. Although emphasis on comprehension is vitally important to the college reader, this emphasis will be wasted until he has the ability to recognize and interpret the words which make up his reading as well as his comprehension exercises. It is for this purpose, then, that phonics should be taught in college.

What then, should college phonics consist of? It should be a reasonable blend of consonant and vowel sounds, of word perception, syllabication, structural analysis, and use of word parts in attacking new words. Granted that some of these skills are those taught in the elementary grades, still, a large number of our college students have missed them and need to be introduced to them, or at least, be provided with a working, thoughtful review of them. At all times, the subject matter should be presented as a means to decipher the cryptograph of the English language.

As taught in college, phonics study should be a thoroughly devised program of total word recognition. The student must be given the opportunity to exercise his ability to cope with new words as he meets them. Besides the pronunciation of the word, the student must be taught the denotation and connotation of the words. He should have some understanding of the history of the English language, since this understanding will help him to grasp the variances in pronunciation, the differences in meanings, and the connotations of many of our words. In addition, he should be able to use effectively known word parts to help himself pronounce new words as well as to unlock the meaning of unfamiliar words.

After preliminary instruction in the alphabet and a review of basic sounds, one should base his phonics instruction on a vocabulary chosen from the reading material of the students. This reading material should be of college level interest and should include challenging words - words that are in the students' speaking vocabulary although not in his reading one. Each word chosen by the instructor should be checked in the dictionary, noting and studying the dictionary spelling. All meanings should be examined and the proper contextual meaning should be chosen. The etymology of the word should be examined to see if it gives any clues to the meaning of other

words. Then the student should try to build new words from the word parts, if appropriate. The word should be used in various kinds of exercises such as recognition of meaning, of synonyms, of antonyms, and of proper dictionary spelling.

At this time, as the student is making his initial study of a particular word, the instructor is reinforcing the phonics instruction by calling attention to the sounds of the vowels in the word and how they are marked in the dictionary. Those consonants which may have a letter or letters different from itself to show their sound should be called to the attention of the students. Accent marks should be noted and discussed. Then the student looks at the various meanings of the word, and fits the proper meaning into the context. Thus, the student has received a thorough approach to his vocabulary study involving many of the phonetic skills, without undue emphasis on any one of them. All this takes place after he has had preliminary instruction in phonics so that he knows what the phonetic skills are and has a general idea of how to use them.

There are very few authorities today who advocate teaching phonics as a separate, isolated system, at all times, without regard to context or meaningful sentences. This is not to say, however, that some students will not need a longer period of instruction in isolated phonics. There may be a few students who need extended work in the phonetic principles of our language, and it is up to the instructor to provide material for these students. This material may be in the form of rhyming words, word perception drills, looking for particular vowel and consonant sounds, marking vowels in simple words, etc. But even in these exercises the students can be challenged if the instructor has thoughtfully prepared the exercises. Instead of the Dick sees Jane level of vocabulary, the instructor can choose words that present a greater challenge to the college student, while at the same time, they fulfill the task of the particular exercise.

In teaching phonics in college, the instructor should remember:

first, to accept the need for it so the students will do likewise;

second, to approach the subject as a review rather than as an entirely new subject;

third, to make every effort to incorporate words which are not in the student's reading vocabulary into the lessons so that the student will be expanding his vocabulary at the same time that he is learning the phonetic principles of his language.

Finally, the instructor must make every effort to correlate the phonetic instruction with the total reading program so that phonics is not consistently taught in isolation, except where an individual student needs extra help.

Phonics does not have to be a "dirty word" among teachers. It has a place of its own and rightfully so. It is up to us teachers of reading to see that its place is one of effective responsibility and respectability.